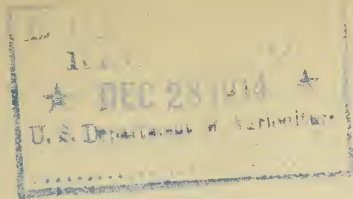


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1

Ag 863 Cr



SPECIAL.

Issued December 28, 1914.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.

SHALL SOUTHERN FARMERS BUILD CREAMERIES?

Prepared in the Dairy Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

The present depression in the cotton market has led the farmers to consider the advisability of growing other crops than cotton. This is a good time to change from the one-crop system to diversified agriculture, and many are seeking information in regard to the possibilities of dairying, especially the establishment of creameries. Prosperity has come to many agricultural communities by the successful operation of creameries, but, on the other hand, many farmers have lost money by investing in creameries of expensive equipment in localities not prepared to operate a creamery successfully.

CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.

The main requirement for the success of the creamery is a sufficient supply of milk or cream; an insufficient supply means failure of the creamery and a loss to all concerned. Experience has proved that about 600 southern cows are necessary to furnish cream enough to operate a creamery economically. The number of available cows in a community is generally overestimated. If whole milk is to be handled it is not advisable to include in this estimate herds at a greater distance than 5 miles from the creamery. If cream is handled, herds 10 miles from the creamery can be included. A creamery must make at least an average of 1,200 pounds of butter a week in order to keep the expenses reasonably low. This will require about 1,000 pounds of butter fat. The smaller the output the greater the cost per pound of manufactured butter, for some of the expenses will remain about the same whether the daily output is 100 or 200 pounds.

CAUSES OF FAILURE.

There are many closed creameries in the United States. Some of these were built where the people were not well informed on condi-

NOTE.—Intended for farmers in the cotton belt who desire to diversify their farming because of the economic crisis which adversely affects the cotton crop at this time.

tions necessary for the operation of a creamery. In most cases there were not cows enough to supply milk; in others failure was due to inexperience in making and marketing creamery products. Some of these creameries were organized by promoters whose whole interest was to sell the machinery and equipment at a high commission. The stockholders in these creameries generally found that they had paid a great deal more for the plant than if they had built it themselves.

BEWARE OF THE PROMOTER.

Southern farmers should have a knowledge of the methods practiced by the creamery promoter, who is invariably a ready talker and in the most glowing colors shows the advantages of a creamery. He never presents the difficulties to be overcome, but shows only the bright side of the creamery business. Promoters make a canvass of the community, preaching the advantages of cooperative creameries. They may circulate literature in which large dividends from other creameries are shown and tell the farmer in fluent language what great returns can be derived from similar establishments in their community. The method which they usually practice is by misleading statements to get a few of the prominent men in a community to subscribe to stock in a creamery organization, after which it is an easy matter to persuade others to subscribe. Instances have been known in which the promoter has induced farmers to sign what they thought was merely a statement favoring the erection of a creamery in the community if it could be organized and successfully operated, but afterwards the farmers discovered that they had signed carefully worded promissory notes. The paper they signed, when unfolded, revealed an ironclad contract for stock in the company. Thus the farmer, unaware of the real nature of the paper, thinks that he is only expressing his interest in the movement, but actually binds himself to purchase stock in the creamery.

Promoted creameries are seldom well organized; usually the buildings are cheaply constructed, improperly equipped, and cost from 50 to 100 per cent more than they should. Such creameries in the South generally fail in a short time.

If a community presents conditions that will make the successful operation of a creamery possible, and if the farmers after knowing the facts prefer to have the creamery built by promoters at a higher price than they can build it themselves, there can be no objection to this method, provided the creamery is properly built and equipped. The greatest injury done by the promoters is that they often sell creameries to farmers in communities where conditions are such that it is impossible for a creamery to succeed, and a creamery which has

failed serves to discourage dairying in that and near-by communities for many years after the failure occurs.¹

HOW TO PROCEED.

There are some places in the South where creameries should be built, because they would furnish a steady cash income to the farmers who supply the milk or cream; but people without experience should not rush into the creamery business until they have become thoroughly informed on the requirements for the successful operation of a creamery.

As previously stated, the cream from about 600 cows is necessary to keep a creamery running economically; therefore, in a creamery agitation the first thing to be done is to make a thorough canvass of the territory from which it is practicable to obtain cream, in order to ascertain the number of cows actually present over and above those required for the production of milk for home use. This information will furnish the basis for definite plans. After ascertaining the number of cows which could furnish cream to the proposed creamery, upon request, this information should be sent to your State agricultural college or to the Dairy Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., either of which will supply instructions and plans for the organization, building, and equipping of a creamery suited to conditions, provided such a plant is likely to succeed in that locality.

¹ This warning in regard to the creamery promoter also applies to the promoter of canning factories. Many canneries have been built where there was not material enough to run them at a profit, and the money invested has oftentimes been a total loss to the stockholders.

